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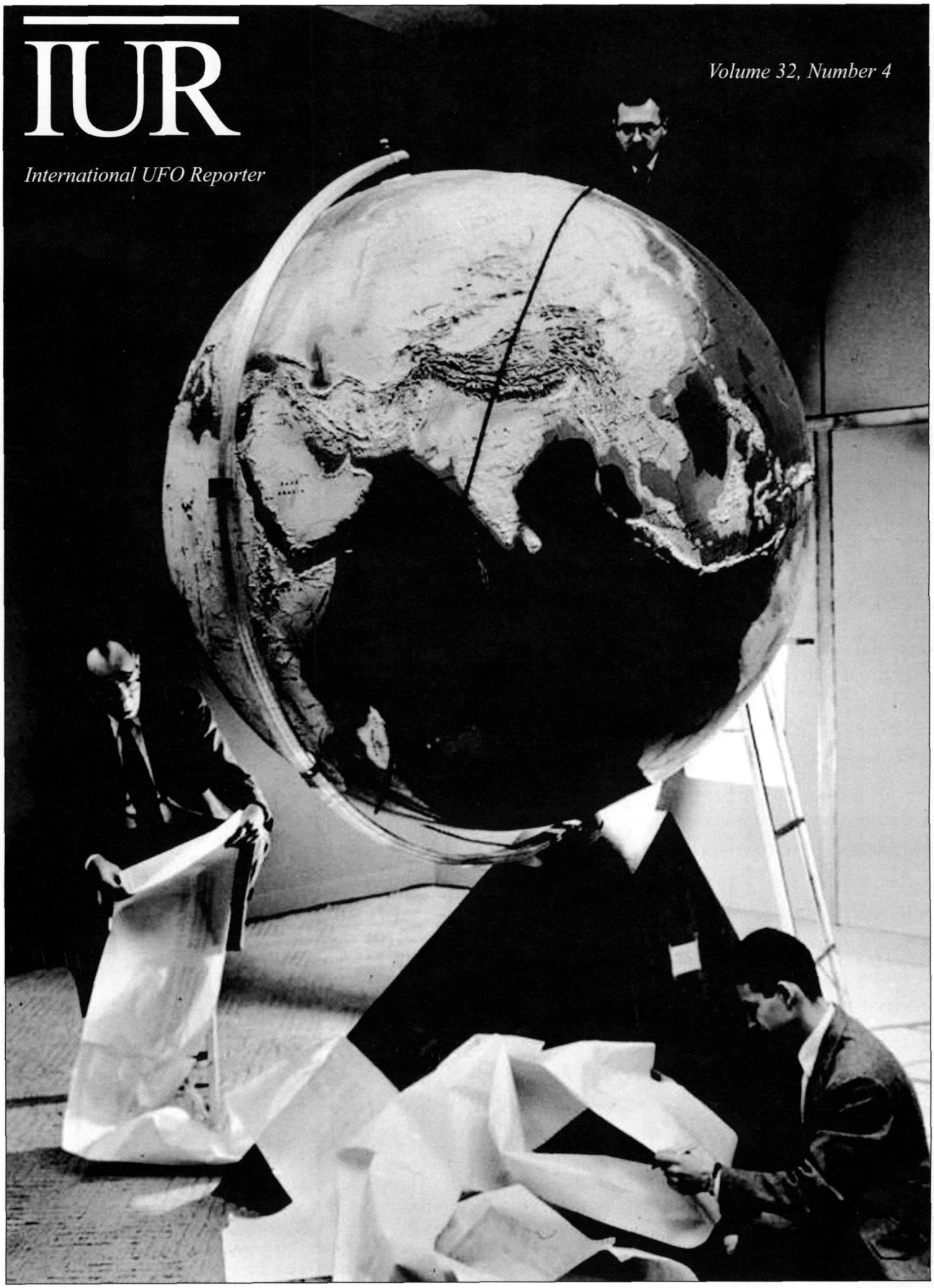

Hynek, Whipple, and Project Moonwatch

INTERNATIONAL UFO REPORTER

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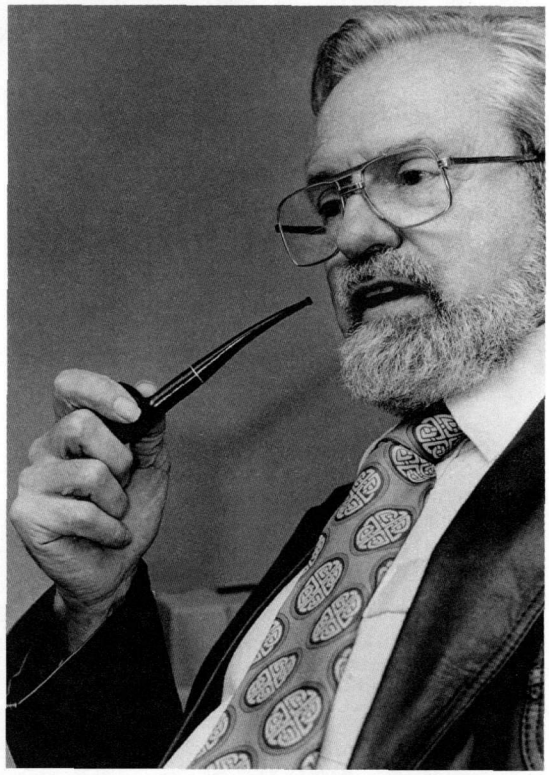

J. Allen Hynek
1910-1986

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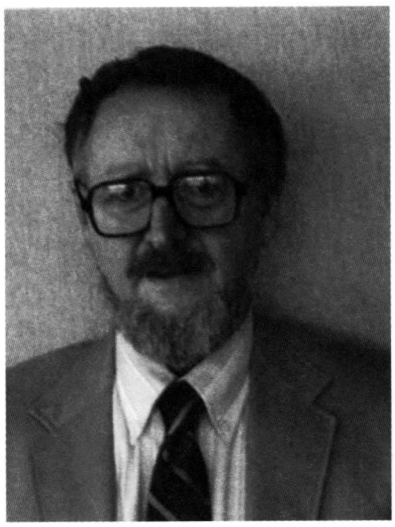
Remembering Dick Hall

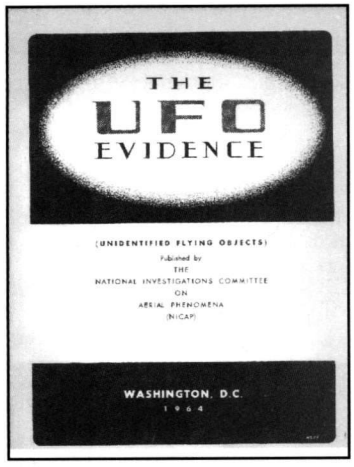
BY TED BLOECHER

On July 17, 2009, ufology tragically lost one of its premiere investigators, researchers, and UFO authors, when Richard H. Hall, of Brentwood, Maryland, succumbed to colon cancer at the age of 78. His output was remarkable, notable mainly for his two extraordinary volumes on the history of UFO sightings: *The UFO Evidence*, published by the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) in 1964, and *The UFO Evidence, Vol. II*, published by Scarecrow Press, in 2000. But it wasn't merely as a UFO author that Dick made notable contributions; in 2006, he published *Women on the Civil War Battlefront* (University Press of Kansas), a fascinating report on women's active roles on the battlefields of the Civil War, often disguised as men, taken from firsthand accounts in diaries and letters of the period.



Richard H. Hall

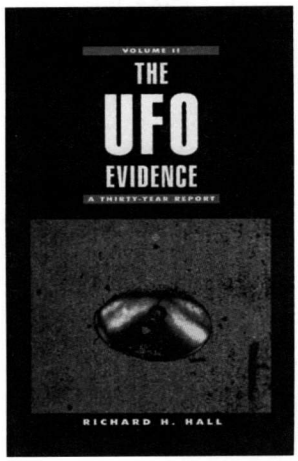
It was my honor and privilege to have known Dick Hall longer than any other associate or colleague in UFO research and investigation, having first met him when he joined Civilian Saucer Intelligence of New York in the mid-1950s, while he was still a student at Tulane University in New Orleans. After his graduation in the late 1950s, we followed Dick's path to Washington, D.C., where he became a key player in the newly organized investigation and research group created by Major Donald E. Keyhoe, NICAP. Among many other responsibilities that he held there, Hall was editor of the group's official publication, *The UFO Investigator*.



After CSI of New York became inactive in the early 1960s, it was Dick Hall who was responsible for bringing Isabel Davis, one of CSI's founders and major players, to Washington to work on the NICAP staff, in 1966. And during the summer of the following year, Hall opened up NICAP's vast resources while I was writing *The UFO Wave of 1947*. Without Dick's generous assistance and cooperation, as well as NICAP's invaluable support, that volume could never have been written.

And in May 1968, it was Dick Hall who was largely responsible for my having made the decision to put my theatre career on temporary hold, move to Washington, and join the staff of NICAP, where I would remain for the next 16 months.

Following NICAP's gradual decline that began in 1969 and led to its eventual demise in the 1970s, Dick moved into other areas, working in the Washington branch of the American Psychological Association, and during the 1980s as an abstractor and indexer at Congressional Information Services, in Bethesda, Maryland; but he remained active in UFO research and investigation, and during the 1990s he served on the board of directors for the Fund for UFO Research. Among the other notable books on the UFO subject was his *Uninvited Guests*, published in 1988 by Aurora Press in Santa Fe. Dick and I stayed in touch through the years, and I was a house guest of his many, many times after he had moved to Brentwood, Maryland, just outside of Washington.



I would like to extend my sympathies to Dick's two surviving brothers, Bob and Bill Hall, and his sister, Mary Lou Dabbs, of Augusta, Georgia, and their respective families. It was because of their consideration and generosity that I was able to join them for

Ted Bloecher is a veteran ufologist who began studying the phenomenon in 1952.

several days during a week of family reunion late in June, down in Maryland, at which time I had the chance to visit with Dick for the last time. Although he was physically quite fragile by then, his mental capabilities were sharp and very much in focus, and I am grateful to his family, and to John Carlson, of College Park, for making this final visit possible.

Dick, you will be sorely missed by your many friends and colleagues. Have a safe journey. ✦

Dick Hall and the Closed Circle

BY JEROME CLARK

Time has been good to ufology's extraterrestrial hypothesis. Its key prediction, made before even one was known to exist, is being fulfilled daily. It turns out that yes, extrasolar planets are ubiquitous. The more there are, the greater the likelihood—perhaps bordering on certainty—of a noteworthy number of worlds hospitable to life, including intelligent life. If, as astrobiologists contend, the galaxy indeed hosts advanced civilizations in the tens of millions (or more), the greater the likelihood—perhaps, again, bordering on certainty—that we will, inevitably, detect evidence of their overwhelming presence. Enter the UFO phenomenon.

A supremely logical man, Dick Hall saw early on that the ETH—well before it was called that—was what remained after you eliminated the explanations that represented themselves as prosaic, even if sometimes they were extraordinary in themselves. Except to the grimly determined, prosaic explanations for the core phenomenon of daylight discs, radar/visuals, CE2s, and the like have proven exercises in futility, serving no evident purpose but to hold heresy at continued bay and to insist, in effect, that long neglect justifies further neglect. After all, what else could justify it?

Dick transcended not only the drearily wrong-headed, not-so-smart conventional wisdom about UFOs but also ufology's assorted ideological fads, for example the fascination with supernaturalism on one hand and the embrace of skepticism by some prominent European figures on the other. He lived long enough to see the great circle close. Yes, he was stubborn, which is sometimes—not, of course, always—a virtue; but more than that, he never abandoned his coolly reasoned reading of the evidence.

Dick was older than I am (by almost exactly 16 years), but we both had been around long enough to know first-generation ufology and to grasp that, whatever its faults and limitations (and there were many), it was essentially correct in its reading of the issue it confronted. I don't mean just about the ETH, though that, too; first-generation ufology, however naïve it often was, understood that UFO reports are amenable to scientific investigation and analysis. The phenomenon has something to engage the attention of military forces, intelligence agencies, psychologists, folklorists, and pop-culturists, but fundamentally, it is a question that only science, properly and fearlessly applied, will be able to answer.

In the meantime, it's up to us ufologists, who too often fall down on the job both because we lack the necessary resources and because, frankly, many of us simply know no better. The best of us, and Dick was as good as they come, have learned to gaze forward, toward a time when (possibly) no ufologist now living remains, a time when scientists turn to what, often at great personal sacrifice (and let us note that Dick died in poverty), we preserved. If not for our research and analysis, the history and contours of a significant phenomenon, arguably a profoundly significant one, would have been lost. After all, hardly anybody in elite authority was paying attention, except to ridicule, disparage, and confuse the discussion with dubious polemics.

In his last years Dick published an old-fashioned paper-and-print bulletin, *The Journal of UFO History,* which mostly examined those remarkable hard-evidence cases from the early years of the controversy, the sorts of reports the ET-phobes in and out of ufology would prefer drop deep into the darkest corner of the memory hole. Dick also contributed regularly to the popular e-mail forum UFO Updates, mostly to challenge both the rigid skeptics and the unhinged believers. He refused to suffer fools gladly, and when he saw the same old foolishness continually reassert itself, he could wax sulphurous. I knew exactly how he felt. He had all the right enemies.

Toward the end, a few weird obsessives were openly desiring his imminent departure, along with mine and several others', from the earth. We were flattered that they cared.

Aside from ufology, Dick and I shared political sympathies, a passion for American history, and a longtime fascination—which we discovered by sheer accident over a conference breakfast one day—with the legendary Western lawman Wyatt Earp. Earp is a controversial figure, but we learned that we had come to identical conclusions about him, too.

Under the sometimes fierce exterior, Dick was a warm, gentle, witty, and forever curious man. He had many friends, and all of us will never cease missing him. He was a giant in ufology's earth. ✦

Jerome Clark, an IUR *editor, is the author of* The UFO Encyclopedia *(1990–1998),* Unnatural Phenomena *(2005), and other books.*

HUMANOID SIZE DISTRIBUTION IN CE REPORTS, 1946–2006

BY AHMAD JAMALUDIN

Alien or humanoid encounter reports have described entities of many sizes, from very small (under one foot) to quite large (over 8 feet). If some of these reports are true experiences, then it would appear that the universe is populated by beings of various heights (assuming that we are not being visited by robots or even biologically engineered creatures). It then becomes reasonable to use these entity reports to study the size distribution of aliens. Is there a more common height among those seen on Earth? Is there an entity height which is the norm in the universe(s)?

The range in entity heights in close encounter cases varies more so than the height of humans. I grouped entity size into six categories for purposes of classification These are giants (over 9 ft.), tall (6.5–8.5 ft.), normal (5–6 ft.), small (3.5–4.5 ft.), little (1.5–2.5 ft.) and tiny (less than one ft.). It must be understood that witness estimates are imprecise—no one has an entity stand still while using a tape measure—but in a close enough encounter, their rough height can be estimated.

A total of 9,383 global encounter reports were compiled by Albert Rosales for the period 1946–2006 and are analyzed for this report. Of this total, 5,205 reports included entity size.

Table 1 shows the overall distribution of entity size for all reports. The most common size is small, or 3.5–4.5 feet, comprising 41% of the reports. This size corresponds to the classic humanoids reported in entity sightings from the 1950s and 1960s, and is the media view of small gray aliens. Perhaps surprisingly, the next most common is not normal (human-sized) but tall, from 6.5 to 8.5 feet (21%). Representative examples are Nordic entities (tall, blond, and handsome), but also ugly large aliens. A large fraction of entities were in the same size range as the average human (19%). And one in 10 entities were giants.

Ahmad Jamaludin has been involved in UFO studies for the past 30 years. His first article appeared in the MUFON UFO Journal *and he has contributed several articles to* Flying Saucer Review *and other UFO magazines in the UK. He is a retired bacteriologist, formerly attached to a veterinary diagnostic laboratory.*

The overall distribution of sizes is not normal or bell-shaped, with one peak in the middle of the range.

Table 1. Reported entity size, 1946 to 2006, all countries

Size	Count	Percentage
Giant	546	10.5
Tall	1,105	21.2
Normal	1,001	19.2
Small	2,145	41.2
Little	317	6.1
Tiny	91	1.7
Total	5,205	100.0

If small-sized humanoids were located nearest to Earth compared to other groups, then we should see this high proportion for that group. But if we assume that there exist cosmic wonders such as the presence of special pathways or shortcuts in space such as wormholes, then vast interstellar distances are insignificant. In that case, small humanoids would actually be most common in the universe (or universes); alternatively, perhaps this group has some special interest in Earth and humans.

In the remainder of this article, I will concentrate on reports from 10 countries or locales with more entity sightings. These include the United States, Brazil, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, Argentina, Canada, Australia, Puerto Rico, and Italy. There were 3,630 reports from these places, about 70% of the total. Almost 40% of this set of reports was from the United States, with the second most from Brazil (9.9%).

If we compare each country's size distribution of humanoid types to that for the whole world, we discover some differences. The United States, Brazil, Canada, Australia, and Italy are similar in their pattern to the overall distribution. There are more tall entities reported in both Russia and the U.K. There are more small entities reported in France and Argentina. Argentina has a greater share of little entities than other countries.

These patterns can be seen in the three charts that ac-

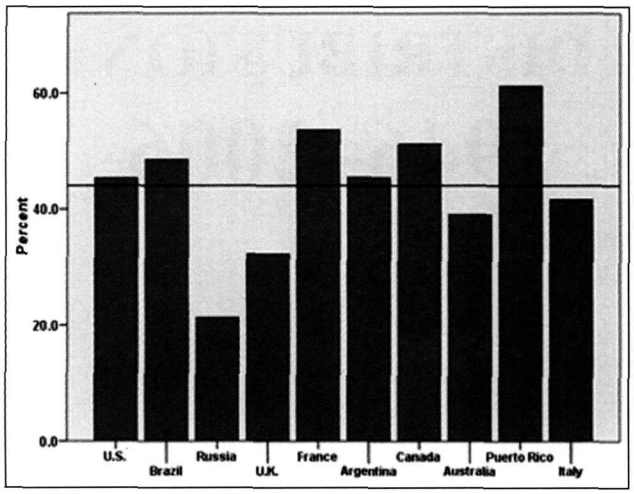


Fig. 1. Distribution of small aliens by location.

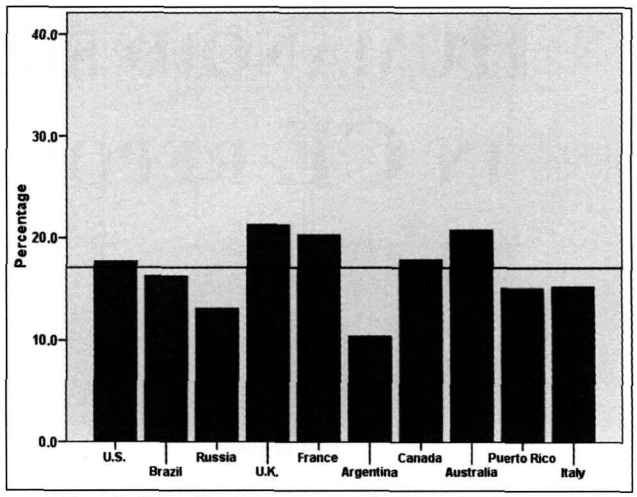


Fig. 2. Distribution of normal aliens by location.

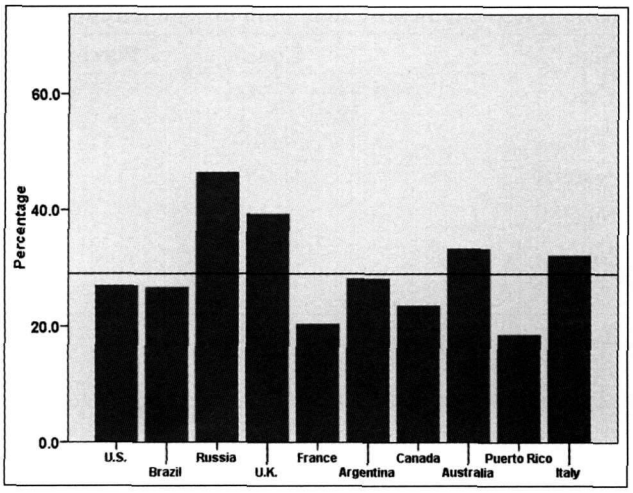


Fig. 3. Distribution of tall aliens by location.

company this article. In each one, the solid horizontal line is the mean percent of that size entity for these ten locations. Figure 1 shows the fewer small entities in Russia and the U.K. and the greater percentages in France and Puerto Rico.

Would different-sized entities really preferentially visit certain countries? We don't know, and it may be just as likely that there is something about the witnesses in a certain country or culture that leads to a specific type of entity report.

Still, if body size is related to such factors as type of star, size of planet, and atmosphere, it is possible that body sizes are not uniformly distributed among ETs, and that some heights are more common than others. Someday all of this might be worked out mathematically, based on astronomical and other data. But maybe we already have a clue in those entities who have been observed during UFO sightings.

Note: The information in this article is derived from my recent study, "60 Years of Neglected Evidence: Analysis of Global Humanoid Encounter Reports, 1946–2006." ✦

New Brazilian UFO documents

A. J. Gevaerd, editor of *Revista Brasileira de Ufologia,* writes: "In August, the Brazilian Committee of UFO Researchers (CBU) has received a massive amount of new UFO-related documents that disclose in detail the inner workings of the official body created by the Brazilian Air Force (FAB) in 1969 to investigate UFOs: the System for the Investigation of Unidentified Aerial Phenomenon (SIOANI). This time, however, the newly disclosed documents have not come from the government as a result of the campaign 'UFOs: Freedom of Information Now!' which so far has produced three official disclosures, the largest and most important of which was on May 4.

"The material was handed over to CBU by civilian researcher Edison Boaventura from Grupo Ufológico do Guarujá, who has kept such material away from the Brazilian UFO community for over 10 years. Boaventura was given the documents by a retired Brazilian Air Force military source in the 1990s and kept it secret since then. At the III World UFO Forum, held in June 2009 in Curitiba, Brazil, however, he decided to hand over the whole lot on behalf of the freedom of information campaign.

"Boaventura turned over 1,300 pages of previously unseen documents from SIOANI, including 28 colored sketches and 64 photos taken by FAB in the 1960s and detailed research carried out in dozens of UFO-related incidents, never made public."

Gevaerd encourages UFO researchers to download, print, publicize, and otherwise share these documents, but with credit to *Revista Brasileira de Ufologia*, emphasizing that the material is coming to the public due to the efforts of the Brazilian Committee of UFO Researchers.

The SIOANI documents are available at www.ufo.com.br/documentos/. Material released by the air force is at www.ufo.com.br/public/abertura_1/ and http://www.ufo.com.br/public/abertura_2/—*Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisa de Discos Voadores.* ✦

The 2008 Canadian UFO Survey: The trend continues

BY MARK RODEGHIER

In a previous *IUR* (32:1, pp. 20–22), I reported on the results from the 2007 Canadian UFO Survey, which every year since 1989 has been compiled by Chris Rutkowski and a team from UFOlogy Research of Manitoba. They collect UFO reports from across Canada, from a variety of sources, and assemble a comprehensive review of UFO sightings in Canada for a calendar year. The most recent survey from 2008 is complete and available on the internet (survey.canadianuforeport.com). I won't provide a comprehensive review of the survey's findings in this article but instead will build on some of my analysis from that earlier article.

UFO REPORTS BY YEAR

As has been pointed out in numerous sources, UFO reports declined in the 1980s and then remained steady into the 1990s, but since then have risen in number. That trend has continued rather dramatically in 2008 in Canada, as evidenced in Figure 1. Reports rose sharply in 2008 to slightly over 1,000, a substantial increase from 2007. Further, the trend since 2000 has continued with an overall linear increase in sightings during the current decade.

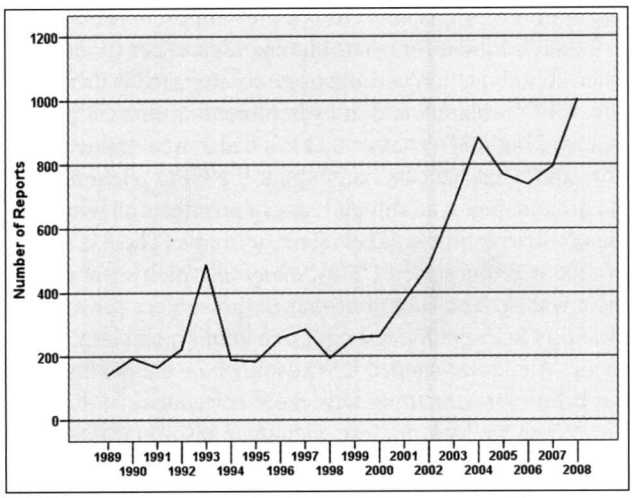


Fig. 1. UFO reports by year, 1989–2008.

It remains difficult to understand what is driving this increase, given the many possible causes. These include easy access to making a UFO report via the internet, more interest in UFOs because of the internet and cable television programs on UFOs, or even more actual UFOs to be seen. What we can say about this increase is that the pattern is unlike anything seen before in this country or Canada. When UFO reports have increased before, they have done so over a comparatively briefer period of months (if not weeks). And when they have increased, they have remained at a high level for only a few months, or two or three years, and then fell back.

What we haven't witnessed is this steady increase over many years. However, if we cast our net more widely, to a country on the opposite side of the globe, and below the equator, we can find a parallel. Tasmania is an island and an Australian state, and the Tasmanian UFO investigators have been diligent about collecting data over many years on UFO sightings. Figure 2 displays the number of UFO reports by year in Tasmania from 1965 to 2006. The small double

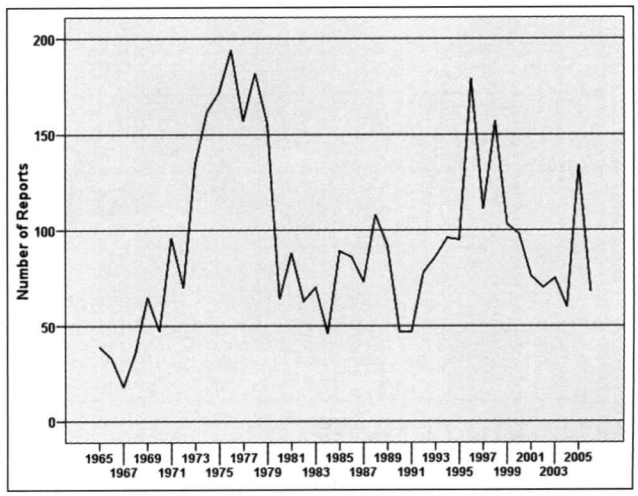


Fig. 2. UFO reports by year in Tasmania, 1965–2006.

Mark Rodeghier is scientific director of the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies.

peak from 1984 to 1989, or the peak in 2005, are typical of the American and Canadian report patterns, but the steady and sharp increase from 1967 to 1976 is reminiscent of the latest trend in Canadian reports. The percentage increase in Tasmania from 1967 to 1976 was much greater (about a factor of 10) than the Canadian increase of about 4.5 in this decade, but the patterns are comparable.

In Tasmania in the 1960s there was no internet and there weren't many television programs on UFOs, at least not like nowadays. So whatever caused this increase down under can't be attributed to those factors. It might have been a real increase in the UFO phenomenon, or it might have been more active investigators (I suspect that was part of the cause). But we do know that the recent increase in Canadian reports is not without precedent, even if we can't understand it.

As a side note, although I stated above that UFO reports have been on the increase recently in Canada and the United States, you can see from Figure 2 that reports have—except for 2005—not been sharply rising recently in Tasmania.

Unexplained UFO reports

UFO reports have increased in Canada, but has this led to a greater proportion of unexplained cases? Figure 3 contains the answer, which is a definitive no. The percentage of unexplained reports continues to hover in the range of about 10–15%. There is no correlation between year and the unexplained report percentage. (In comparison, for those who like their statistics, the correlation between year and the number of reports is .86.)

It is true, though, that during the period from 2001 to 2008 when all reports were increasing rapidly, the percentage of unexplained reports dropped from about 17% to 10%, although the largest drop occurred just last year in 2008.

What we all really care about are unexplained reports, and in particular, the absolute number of unexplained reports. In other words, what captures our continued interest in the UFO phenomenon are the things that can't be explained, not another misperception of the planet Venus. So fundamentally, the trends we study about the UFO phenomenon should center on unexplained reports. To that end, Figure 4 shows the number of unexplained reports over time for Canada. Notice that the number of these reports shot up beginning in 2001, corresponding to the trend in all reports. But something happened after 2004. Since then, the unexplained reports have decreased and increased quite a bit, but not gone any higher (compare to Figure 1). In fact, the number of unexplained cases in 2008 (99) is much less than in 2007 (132).

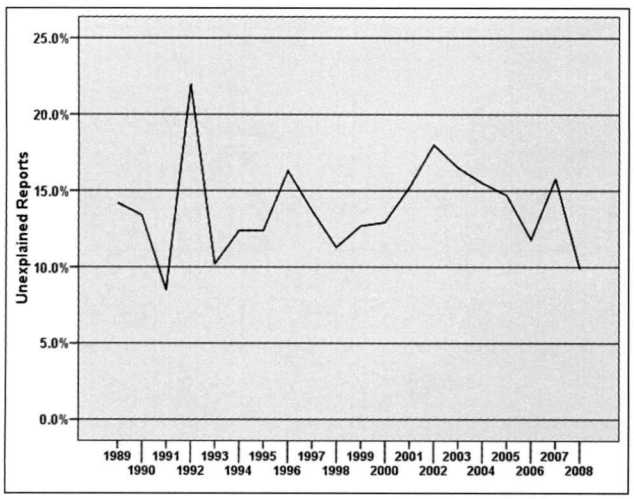


Fig. 3. Percentage of unexplained reports by year, 1989–2008.

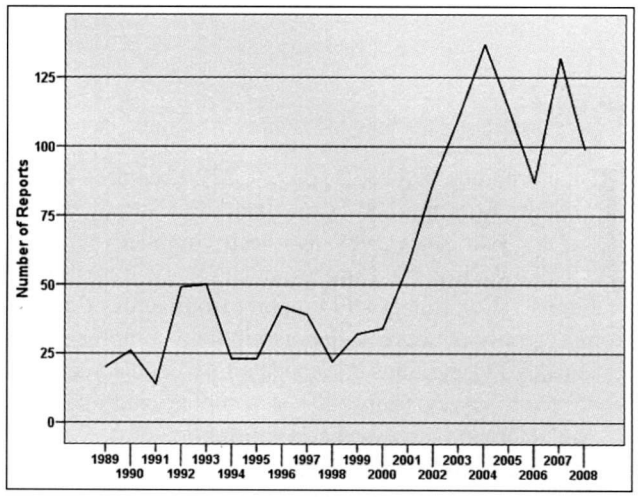


Fig. 4. Number of unexplained reports by year, 1989–2008.

Perhaps what we need to understand is why unexplained reports rose so much from 2001 to 2004, but then have remained steady, at best, since then. I won't trouble you with any hunches about this, but you may well have your own ideas (and I'd be happy to hear them).

Close Encounter cases

Cases where UFOs come close to the witness, or leave traces in the environment, or where humanoids are seen (without an ostensible abduction) are much less common today than years ago. UFO researchers don't often mention this (in public, at least), but it is a change that has had a great influence on how and what we can study about the UFO phenomenon. No ground traces, no stopped cars, or no effects on witnesses means there is little solid evidence to study. (There is no end of videos of purported UFOs, many of which seem to find their way to YouTube, but that is the subject for another article.) Don't get me wrong, I like your typical large, low-flying, triangular-shaped UFO as much as the next person, but I'd prefer something with more substance.

When we look at close encounter cases in Canada, we find a steady, if irregular, decrease from 1989 all the way to 2004, after which the percentage is about constant (see Figure 5). This pattern doesn't match that for the percentage for all unknown cases (and if we calculate the proportion of close encounters to all unknowns, the pattern is similar

(continued on page 23)

GAZING AT THE MOONS

BY MICHAEL D. SWORDS

On October 4, 1957, the Soviets launched Sputnik. Perhaps only one group, one organization, could be said to have been ready for it, and that was Project Moonwatch—a grassroots effort that Donald Menzel's close colleague at the Harvard University Department of Astronomy had envisioned as early as 1955. Fred Whipple, a world authority on comets and meteors, had foreseen the inevitable launching of artificial satellites (although he thought that the first ones would be ours) and the value of observing and plotting their orbits. Many scientists and government officials agreed with him; but, unlike Whipple, they didn't think that ordinary citizens could do the job. Whipple persisted, argued for the great boost to science this would create with the public, and, by the time Sputnik launched, had organized about 200 teams of mostly volunteers who were ready to observe the heavens and send data to the computation bureau at Harvard/MIT.

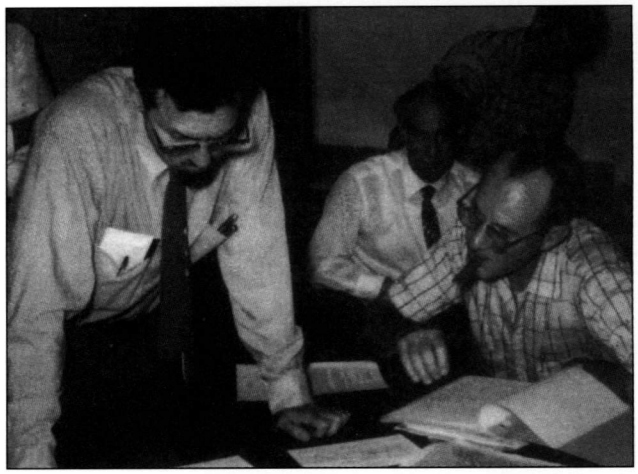
The program was under the supervision of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory (SAO), of which Whipple was director. He needed professional personnel to help with the central operation and chose as assistant director someone we all know, J. Allen Hynek. Hynek accepted the job, and because he did, he was not the regular presence at Project Blue Book during the next years that he had been in the Edward Ruppelt, Bob Olsson, and Charles Hardin eras. Because of this, he mostly missed the 1957 wave as far as analysis was concerned. With Hynek (UFOs) and Whipple (meteors and fireballs) at the helm, Moonwatch was primed to be a feeder mechanism for observations of things for which it wasn't primarily created. What, then, did the Moonwatchers see?

What Moonwatch did or did not see played a role in the public's opinion about UFOs. In late 1957, *Science News Letter* wrote a debunking article about flying objects. It said:

> Astronomers point out that not one "saucer" has been reported as a result of astronomical observations. Considering the number of newspaper reports concerning strange flying objects, they believe this lack of astronomical data is impressive.
>
> Besides the astronomical telescopes and cameras working in all parts of the country every clear night, there are now hundreds of Moonwatch teams on the lookout for a glimpse of one of the Sputniks. Not one of them has reported seeing flying saucers.

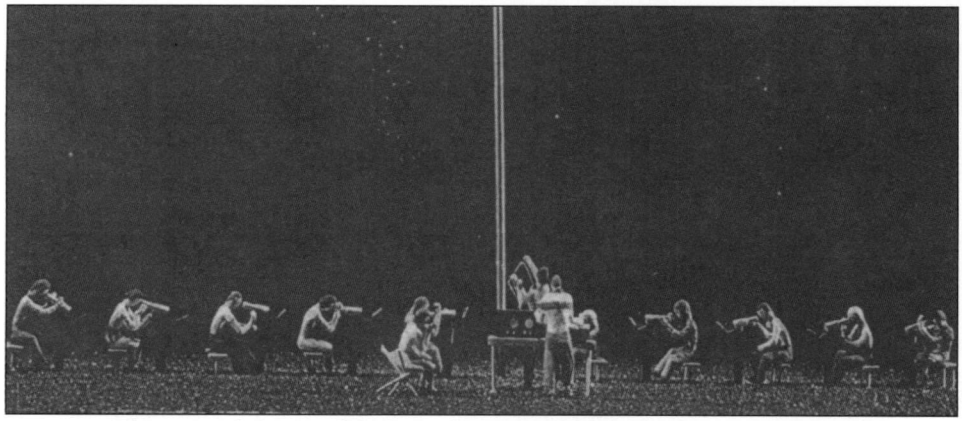
We know that these statements are false in any reasonable way of reading them, and the product of either ignorance or deception. But Hynek himself was contributing to the problem, both by answering an inquiry from Ruppelt (who around 1958 was beginning to amass new information for the second edition of his book) in a similar fashion and by going along with a policy of not talking about "unidentifieds," as initiated by the SAO/Moonwatch administration.

Of course, the truth was very different. Unidentifieds began popping up in the Moonwatch observations almost immediately from the program's inception. Hynek later said that he had spoken too soon to Ruppelt. Whether that was just him rewriting history or whether he really was *not* yet aware of the UFO reports coming from the teams, we don't know. He later came clean with Walter Webb (see his "Allen Hynek

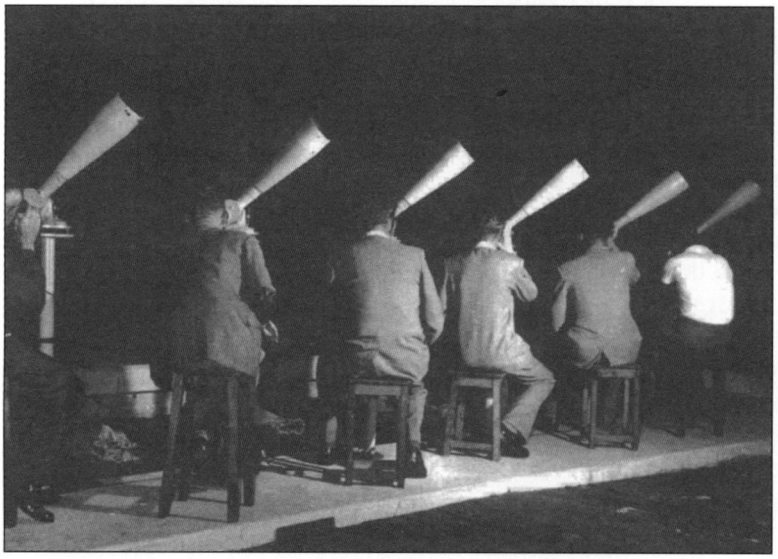


Above: J. Allen Hynek (left) and Fred Whipple at Project Moonwatch. Right: Whipple and Hynek.

Michael D. Swords is professor emeritus of the Environmental Institute, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo.



The general set-up of the line of observers, their instruments, and the central mast to mark the meridian.



Members of the Project Moonwatch team in Capetown, South Africa.

As I Knew Him," *IUR*, Jan./Feb. 1993, pp. 4–10, 23) and admitted that unidentifieds had not only been often reported by the teams but even photographed with the Baker-Nunn telescopic cameras they used. Whereas this may have been a stunning surprise to some of our constricted scientists, it is not to us. Our question is merely what sort of reports did the SAO office and Hynek receive?

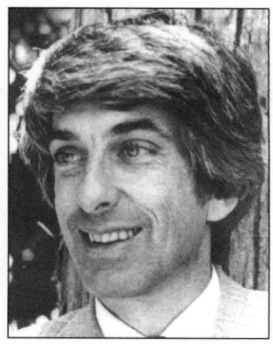
Moonwatch UFO reports

In the CUFOS archives there exists a stack of documents about three inches thick. This could be labeled (though it is not) the Hynek-CUFOS Moonwatch file. It is comprised of a great number of diverse items: actual Moonwatch reports, reports from Moonwatchers when not precisely on Moonwatch duty, Moonwatch-like reports from other citizens (almost what we would call a witness report letter), a few military reports, a wad of newspaper reports of satellite observations, and so on. There is a partial draft of a proposal by Jacques Vallee on using some of this material, citing at least 36 of these reports as the basis for a larger study. Far from nothing going on, there was a steady flow of observations—enough to inspire Vallee to consider a serious and creative project.

Unfortunately, due to the intense anti-UFO bias of the time, a perfectly good idea went without funding. But that's normal for us. We can at least appreciate a forgotten aspect of the UFO phenomenon by reviewing a small number of cases.

Table 1 lists these Hynek-Vallee cases that come from the satellite observations. In reading them, one is impressed with the conservative nature of the descriptions. This is eminently sensible. Hynek is, as always, protecting his reputation, and Vallee is trying to get a stodgy institution (Northwestern University) to fund a worthy project on a controversial subject. The vast majority of the 36 cases are Moonwatch or professional satellite-network observations. Hynek could almost rationalize the list as being in support of his old "nocturnal meandering light" hypothesis, which was a wonderful camouflage to hide behind when talking to other scientists. Also, most of these reports, either actually or theoretically, had accurate data (time, positions, apparent velocities, locations) associated with them. If Vallee could get funding, there would be even more. But that didn't happen. Even later, when the University of Colorado project allegedly legitimized scientific UFO research, the best people we had couldn't get Northwestern—Hynek's home institution—to move.

What UFO cases are in the satellite file? The very first one is worth a mention. The 1957 Mount Stromlo Observatory incident was observed by four professionals associated with that facility. The case was a simple flyover, but (and this is the point in almost of all these cases) the observation was made by experts who would know both what should and should not be in the sky. For you or me, some of these distant-light sightings would have meant nothing. However, the majority of these observers knew exactly that "X" shouldn't be there. The Mount Stromlo case is also ironic because the observatory director was Bart Bok, a former associate of Donald Menzel at Harvard and a debunker in his own right. Bok was forced by some of these observations to make a grudging admission of puzzlement to the Australian press.



Jacques Vallee

Case 30 on the list is also of special interest. This was a 1961 observatory incident witnessed by Vallee himself, among others,

Table 1. Hynek-Vallee original 36 cases

Case Number	Date	Location	Category of Observer	Comments
1	11-7-57	Mount Stromlo Observatory, A.C.T., Australia	Astronomers	4 professionals see brilliant pink-orange object
2	1-24-58	Fort Worth, Tex.	Moonwatch	White object; seems to merge with Gamma Geminorum
3	8-19-58	Bartlesville, Okla.	Moonwatch	Flashing red object seen 3 times in 1½ hours
4	8-20-58	Roanoke, Va.	Moonwatch	Bright flashing round object seen 3 times
5	10-13-58	Las Cruces, N.Mex.	Moonwatch	Object flashed; seems to approach observer
6	12-3-58	González Videla Base, Antarctica	Scientists	Oval object passes on straight trajectory
7	3-2-59	Chattanooga, Tenn.	Moonwatch	+5 magnitude, like car headlight, 1°/sec velocity
8	3-20-59	Arlington, Mass.	Citizens	Silent egg-shaped object passes overhead
9	4-14-59	Mitaka, Tokyo, Japan	SAO station	Flashing object (1/3-sec. frequency); photos
10	5-28-59	San Antonio, Tex.	Moonwatch	Multiple simultaneous theodolite observations
11	6-4-59	NE Pittsburgh, Pa.	Moonwatch	Red, +1 magnitude object on steady course
12	8-15-59	Isle of Wight, U.K.	Moonwatch	5 "satellites" in 2 groups; same track
13	9-8-59	East Rock, Conn.	Moonwatch	Oblong object of "tremendous size"; bright
14	11-17-59	West Palm Beach, Fla.	Moonwatch	Object changes speeds and makes a 60-degree turn
15	6-19-60	Terre Haute, Ind.	Moonwatch	+1 magnitude object moving at 0.5 degrees/sec.
16	6-25-60	Van Nuys, Calif.	Moonwatch	+8 magnitude object moving at 0.5 degrees/sec.
17	7-15-60	Van Nuys, Calif.	Moonwatch	+3 magnitude red object moving at 0.5 degrees/sec.
18	7-26-60	Van Nuys, Calif.	Moonwatch	+2 magnitude red object moving at 0.2 degrees/sec.
19	8-25-60	Bethpage, N.Y.	Grumman	Unidentified "satellite" photographed
20	9-5-60	Dunkirk, France	COSPAR Station	+2.8 magnitude yellow object with 40-second trajectory
21	9-8-60	Sacramento, Calif.	Moonwatch	+7 magnitude white object moving at 0.4 degrees/sec.
22	9-22-60	China Lake, Calif.	Moonwatch	+4 magnitude yellow object moving at 0.6 degrees/sec.
23	1-13-61	Albuquerque, N.Mex.	Moonwatch	+9 magnitude object moving at 0.2 degrees/sec.
24	2-16-61	Bologna, Italy	Amateur astronomer	+4 magnitude slow moving object
25	5-5-61	Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia [now Zambia]	N/A	Rapidly moving red object with white lights
26	5-8-61	Besançon, France	Satellite network	Measurement of object by 2 theodolites
27	5/9/61	Dunkirk, France	COSPAR Station	+6.2 magnitude flashing object in retrograde orbit

Table 1 (cont'd). Hynek-Vallee original 36 cases

28	6-14-61	Bedford, Mass.	Amateur astromomer	Pulsating (1/sec.) object; 1 cm. diameter apparent size at arm's length
29	7-4-61	St. Louis, Mo.	Moonwatch	Large "fuzzy" object; simultaneous theodolite observations
30	7-11-61	Paris-Meudon Observatory, France	Satellite network	+2 magnitude object measured by theodolite
31	10-12-61	Bristol, U.K.	Moonwatch	Green-white, rotating, fast-moving oval
32	4-6-62	Kansas City, Mo.	Moonwatch	Bright yellow object with no tail
33	9-23-63	Eagles Mere, Pa.	Aeroengineer	Bright object makes 3 overhead passes; telescope
34	10-25-63	South Minneapolis, Minn.	Student astronomer	Red lights in ellipse; stops, then accelerates away
35	3-6-64	Oceanport, N.J.	Moonwatch	Brilliant silver "area" produces "strands like hair"
36	5-18-66	Mexican airspace	Airline crew	Blue/blue-green "line" becomes circular

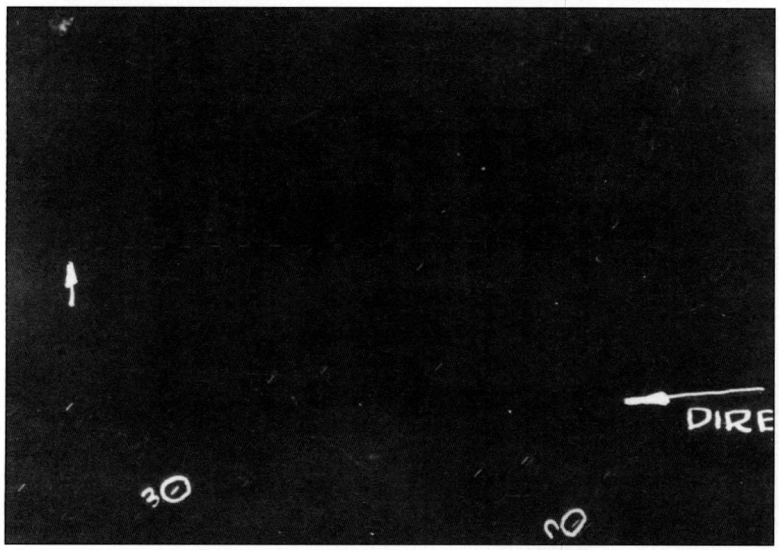
at the Paris-Meudon Observatory. Several colleagues also recorded the "satellite." The following day the director of the project confiscated all their data and destroyed it, apparently in fear of being laughed at by the press, scientific colleagues, and the Americans. This experience properly boggled Vallee's mind (and spirit, no doubt), as he was hoping for a little more idealism in the search for truth. It did ufology a great service, however, as Vallee soon afterwards met Aimé Michel and Pierre Guérin, by year's end had quit the observatory, and launched full force into statistical studies of UFOs. (He writes about this period in the first volume of his diaries, *Forbidden Science*; UFO historians and others should read it.)

Case 19, August 25, 1960, was probably viewed as the case that would underpin the proposal. Right in the middle of an intense burst of scientific, Moonwatch, and citizen interest in these mystery satellites, the primary tracking station of Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corporation at Bethpage, New York, photographed one. Grumman was, to say the least, excited. They immediately produced a proposal to the U.S. Air Force to share data in hopes of plotting a firm orbit for the "whatever-it-is." Grumman noted:

- The color of the object varied from carrot to straw.
- It traveled at a rate which appears to be comparable to previous satellites.
- The course followed by the object was in an easterly to westerly direction.
- The object visually appeared at about the time of the first visible evening pass of Echo 1.

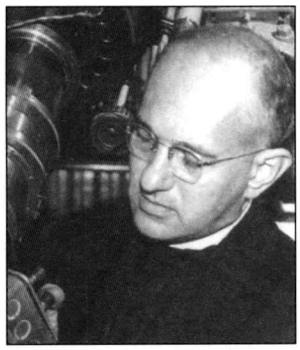
Grumman guessed that the object was in an eccentric orbit, with an apogee of as much as 4,200 miles and a perigee of about 300 miles. They felt that they had a dozen reasonable reports beyond the "many more" received by the Air Force. One correspondent in England had sent "several timed photographs."

Meanwhile, the observers making reports not on the Hynek-Vallee list were seeing a lot more fun and interesting things. On the same date of the Grumman photograph, several USAF personnel along with some Georgetown University science graduate students saw an object fly over on the same track that Echo 1 crossed shortly thereafter. UFO researcher Dick Hall wrote to Georgetown astronomer Fr. Francis Heyden, asking for information to add to NICAP's records. In exchange, he told Heyden of the Adler Planetarium case (see below) and that NICAP had several citizens report objects on both August 25 and 26. This was probably an excusable mistake, since he could not know that Heyden had a long history as a consultant to the Pentagon. Heyden finally responded on October 25, saying that he had questioned the observers. Because it was too fast for a satellite, it must not have been one. Therefore, it was "a light on a high-flying jet plane." Any other reports could



The Grumman photo, August 25, 1960.

have had nothing to do with this one. Well, right or wrong, *that* was vintage Air Force talk.



Fr. Francis Heyden

Heyden had comfortably insulated himself from all the other sightings. Grumman's photo made no difference in expanding his consciousness (at least publicly), nor did the Chicago case of August 26. This event was interesting, as it pitted one professional astronomer against another in a rare crack in the establishment. At the Adler Planetarium in Chicago, Director Robert I. Johnson and others saw a mystery satellite. Due to the subsequent uproar, he produced a standard letter on office stationery to handle the requests. In part it read:

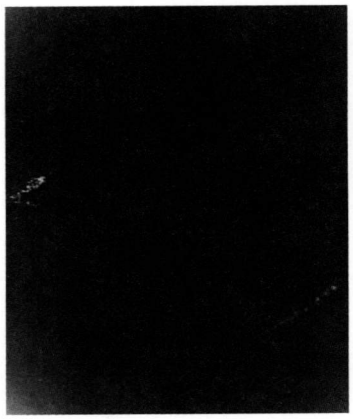
> On Friday, August 26, at approximately 9 p.m. CDT, our Museum staff observed a faint reddish object in the sky moving from east to west. Apparently this object or similar ones were almost simultaneously seen by both inexperienced and professional observers throughout the country. It is believed that the object we observed was photographed at a satellite tracking station on the East Coast. From these observations it was found that an orbit could be calculated, but since the observations are inadequate it cannot be said the object is revolving about the earth. The most we can say at present is that due to inadequate observations the nature of the object remains unexplained. . . .
>
> Since the advent of the "space age" people have been becoming increasingly interested in observing passages of artificial satellites. The Planetarium staff has noted a rise in the number of unidentifiable objects in the sky reported to our institution during this period. This is due to the fact that more people are watching the sky so objects and events that have gone unnoticed in the past are now being observed.

Well, such commentary from a member of the academic tribe would not do. Up to the defense of orthodoxy stepped Gerard Kuiper, world-famous astronomer of both the University of Chicago and the University of Arizona, and one of the most arrogant scientists on the planet. Kuiper, who was a relatively constant thorn in the behind of both Allen Hynek and James McDonald across the years, debunked Johnson's sighting with a wave of the hand: Johnson and his colleagues couldn't have seen anything remarkable because he himself had been observing Echo 1 and *he* didn't see anything. Johnson and the others had merely seen airplane lights. Showing an amazing ability to insult people in public, Kuiper went on to say that astronomy experts are easily fooled by mere airplanes because they think they can't be (making himself the incredible exception to this rule). When confronted with Kuiper's tirade, Johnson held his response down to a scoff: "I know an airplane when I see one."

Gerard Kuiper

Once again, we are treated to the warped phenomenon of accepting the opinion of an orthodox tribe member (who saw nothing) and ignoring the report of the tribe member who actually experienced an anomaly (even, in this case, several members).

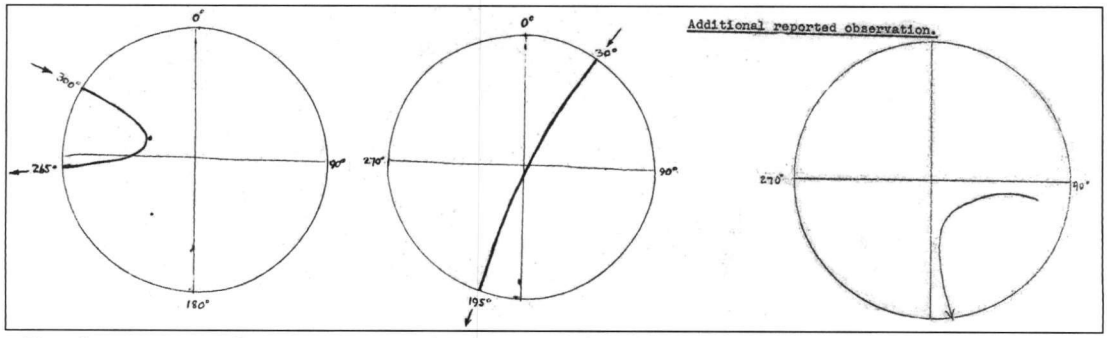
Even given Kuiper's status, his knee-jerk debunking in this case is somewhat surprising. Admittedly, Heyden had done the same thing (though more politely), but these incidents took place amid a flurry of sightings and photographs. And the Grumman photo was not the only one. Bracketing the Grumman, Georgetown, and Adler reports were two cases of several citizens filming tracks of objects, superficially resembling Echo, but with Echo visible in the same sky. In Charleston, West Virginia, on August 16 and in Bloomfield, Connecticut, on September 11, photos were published that had been taken by members of the public that seemed to be honest reports. Dick Hall told the woman from Charleston that NICAP believed hers to be the fourth time the object had been caught on film.



The Charleston photo, August 16, 1960. The mystery object is on the left, and Echo 1 is the streak on the right.

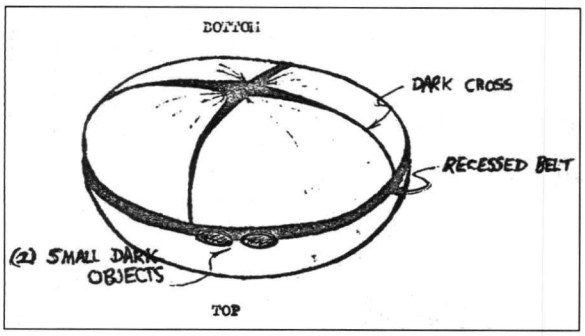
A particularly interesting Moonwatch case occurred on May 28, 1960, in San Antonio. This was really something. The team was set up and observing (sort of a practice exercise before the expected satellite appearance) when two members simultaneously shouted "Ho!" Their two telescopes were oriented to cover the same patch of sky. The two observers were set to concentrate on separate halves of the field of vision, however (one to the left field of view, one to the right). Very rapidly (in less than a second), an object that was silvery or aluminum in color shot into the left field at 300° and curved away in a parabolic path, leaving the telescope's field at 265°. Simultaneously, the second witness saw a similar object enter the field at 30° and execute a more gradual hyperbolic curve, exiting the field at 195°. The Moonwatch leader rated these observers as two of his best veterans. Speculating a bit now, the leader said that if the paths of the objects were extended along their original "flight plans," they probably would have collided if they were in the same plane. Less speculatively, he said that if the objects were reflecting sunlight, they had to be "at least 350 miles high and traveling at least 17,000 mph."

The incident was not quite over, however, as a third team



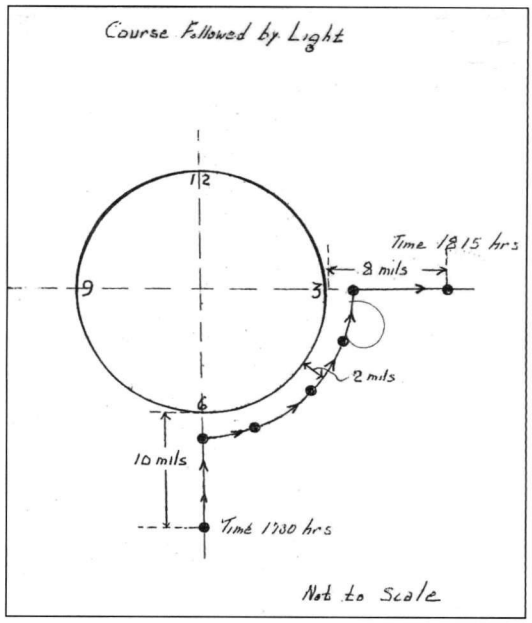
The objects seen in San Antonio, May 28, 1960. On the left, the object seen by the observer focusing on the left side of the scope. In the center, the object seen by the observer focusing on the right side of the scope. On the right, the object seen in another part of the sky.

member, focused on an entirely different patch of sky, also saw an incursion in his telescopic field at the exact moment when he heard his teammates yell "Ho!" This was another silvery object on a fast parabolic path. There were no exact degrees written on this diagram, but the observer apparently picked up this object at about 100° moving across the scope, then bending in a parabolic path to leave at about 165°. This trajectory could be interpreted as clearing away from the other action already described. This report is certainly interesting; perhaps it was too interesting to include in a ground-breaking funding proposal.



There are a few obvious UFO reports in the file. The December 13, 1965, Fort Worth, Texas, incident (above) is one such. It was probably put with the rest because it was a report by an amateur astronomer to the USAF Air Technical Intelligence Center and involved viewing the thing through several telescopes. The UFO moved from directly beneath the Moon and past Arcturus, whereupon it suddenly disappeared. This object had to be much closer than the satellites, as you can see from the detail of the drawing.

There were at least three cases in these files that I increasingly find interesting and somewhat chilling. These are events where the UFO seems to be putting on a precise aerial display for a particular witness. I call these "astro-alignments," where to one observer, at a specific location, the object seems to be aligning itself with a distant astronomical object (Moon, planet, star) and apparently moving around it. Unless the UFOs really were at astronomical distances, this apparent precision in display must be for the benefit of only one observation point on Earth. If so, what this presupposes in terms of a long-distance awareness of what the observer is doing at the moment (and exactly where he's doing it) is a little bothersome. Nevertheless, some of these astro-alignment cases seem so far beyond random chance that they seem to indicate exactly that. If you include the narrowing of the observation to the field of view of a telescope, then the "insider knowledge" required is even greater. If you are willing to accept the crazy thought that an astronomer could be given an astronomy-related UFO display, well, maybe that's further than we want to go. (See my article, "We Know Where You Live," *IUR*, 30:2, pp. 7–12, for an earlier description of this class of cases).



The first of this case type in this batch of files comes from NICAP, so Hynek and Vallee may not have known about it. It comes from El Paso, Texas, and the witness was a University of Michigan aeronautical engineer, an Army artillery captain, and a rocket project officer at Fort Bliss. On December 13, 1959, he was out with his binoculars in the early evening looking at the Moon (sort of a hobby with him). This evening a lighted object (see above diagram) approached the Moon very slowly in the six o'clock position. Once nearly in line with the lunar edge, it began a precision journey, skirting the edge until it reached three o'clock. It

then left on a straight track directly away. During this event, the officer had called his wife and two neighbors to witness the performance.

NICAP sent this to a consultant who actually tried to convince them that the object was a balloon. A major point in his reasoning was, (a) this object was not something *really* near the Moon (okay, agreed by all), and (b) therefore it had to be a coincidence of a normal object and the line-of-sight to the Moon. It was 1960. It was unthinkable that the coincidence (no matter how geometrically neat) could have been deliberate. Well, it's practically unthinkable now, so Bud Ledwith (the first investigator on the Kelly-Hopkinsville scene, and inspirer of Isabel Davis and Ted Bloecher on *Close Encounter at Kelly and Others of 1955*), you're forgiven. Of course, bug-eyed, pointy-eared, gray, glowing denizens straight from a horror novel are more thinkable than astro-alignment. But, it seems to have happened, anyway.

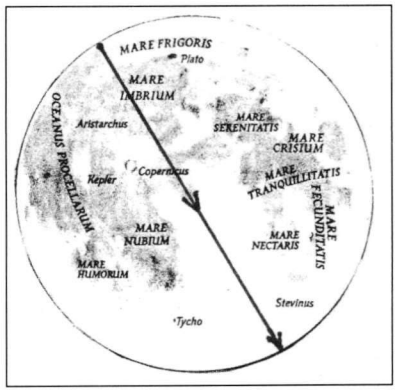
On October 8, 1959, in Mobile, Alabama, two amateur astronomers began a saga where they believed that they were regularly observing some unknown object transit the Moon from west to east. This transit passed directly over the crater Copernicus. They interpreted this, rather naturally, as the visible part of an orbit of the Moon by whatever this was. They said that they saw this fast-moving shape "every night that weather permitted for a period of 33 days."

After a week's worth of this, they wrote the SAO Moonwatch headquarters to report the phenomenon. Moonwatch, of course, immediately noted that no other lunar observers had seen this; therefore it was not a Moon-circling object (again, agreed). Consequently, this phenomenon had to be close to the Mobile astronomers to be in their line of sight but no one else's (again, logical). All that Moonwatch or the Air Force could imagine was a regular fly-by of birds. Thus, they preserved orthodoxy by ignoring the precision of transiting directly over Copernicus (repeatedly).

Perhaps the witnesses were particularly bad observers who emotionally crammed every new thing into a pattern. Or maybe they were just telling tales. The latter seems unlikely, since they reported the transits a second time to the Air Force itself. If the details of their observations are close to accurate, it would be unavoidable to reason that some object was performing a precision display for *them*—with an exactness of a high nature, as it would involve the narrow field of their telescope. Unthinkable? Agreed . . . almost.

Our next report is from Portland, Oregon, on September 25, 1958. The Oregon Moonwatch team was on the job that evening, but it was an off hour and so they were gazing at the Moon itself. Objects began crossing the Moon's face (see diagram in the next column). Occasionally a transit was a bird, but that was not the mystery. There were "tiny dark objects" that behaved differently: "The thing that was so strange is that except for a very few observations of objects, they passed across in the same direction, and in the same location." The transit time was about one second.

Moonwatch was, naturally, flummoxed by this report, but the practical administrator at headquarters, Alex Geddes,



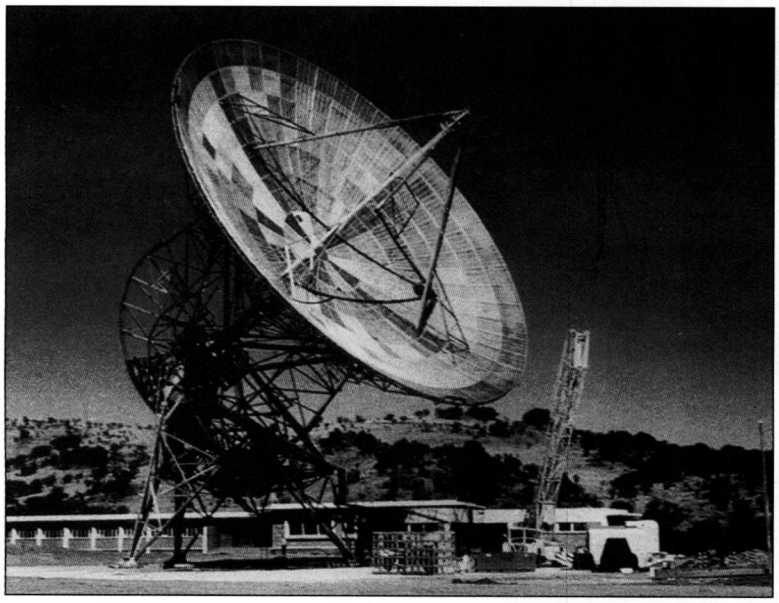
liked these people and sent a supportive letter. In it he said:

> Very many thanks for all your information on the transit of objects across the moon on September 25, and for all your trouble in connection with the observation. I wish I had time to explain what I do with all the observations of U.O.s [Unidentified Objects] that come in to us, but am hoping that someday soon a general memo may be issued on the subject. Briefly though, we keep watching the listing in the U.O. Log and comparing them with new reports in case any of them should "line up" with each other and thus suggest the existence of an unknown satellite with an orbit we can calculate and predict for.
>
> Although this watch on U.O.s is part of my job, the regular MW work takes up practically all of my normal working hours, and the U.O.s have to be left to evenings and week-ends. But don't think I'm grumbling! I enjoy every minute of it and just don't want you to think that I just sit back and shake hands with the U.O. observations as they come in, while you good people and others go to so much trouble to turn them in!

So far from there being no UFOs in the Moonwatch data, there were so many, so regularly, that they were part of the process.

Now, for a case which could be a coincidence. It was December 1, 1962, in East Point, Georgia. A husband and wife were watching the Moon through their 6-inch reflector telescope. The Moon was a quarter full, so most of its surface was dark. In that black area, well away from the terminator, the husband saw a bright spot which seemed to light up. It got so bright that he hurriedly got his wife to witness it as well. The light was brilliant red. She then said that it was starting to move, and it transited across the face of the Moon, then (showing it was not at lunar distance, but much closer) continued moving in a straight line across the blue Georgia sky, faster and faster until it was gone.

In this case, the positioning of the object in the middle of the Moon was obviously a spatial coincidence, but was it merely a random chance event? It was only one data point, a straight line. Our other cases have had multiple pass-bys or peculiar geometric flight patterns. Is this "coming out" of the object in the center of the lunar disk (while an astronomer was looking at it) enough? Whether this was an astro-alignment display or not, it remains an unidentified object.

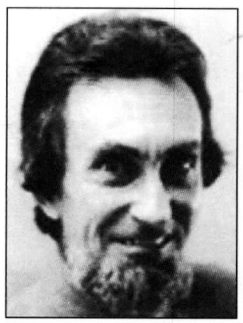


The Deep Space Instrumentation Facility, South Africa.

JUST ONE MORE

As I read through these Moonwatch and unidentified satellites files, the feeling I get from them is of a group of serious people who loved astronomy and space programs and who were doing their honest best to contribute whatever they could. But there was one story in the file that probably flew a little too high. You be the judge—it's really too good to leave out. Caveat emptor.

The story goes like this: A Canadian man named Geof Gray-Cobb traveled to Africa with his wife and daughter. He had some training in electronics, and so he found a job with the Deep Space Instrumentation Facility (now the Hartebeesthoek Radio Astronomy Observatory in South Africa), which controlled a 92-foot-diameter radio telescope dish. From mid-1962 through early 1966, he worked with his colleagues as part of the array of stations that tracked Ranger and Mariner spacecraft, both of which were coordinated out of the Jet Propulsion Lab in Pasadena. At the time in question (October 1965), the target was Mariner 4. As usual, nothing much was happening (except that in September the vehicle had a small, inexplicable change of course).



Geof Gray-Cobb

It was on the afternoon of October 22 when one of the DSIF operators stated that "signal strength" was rising. This, if it was from Mariner, was impossible unless the vehicle had reversed course (it hadn't). All the facility's instruments were checked—there was nothing wrong. They alerted JPL. The signal strength was now so high that you could hear instruments clicking as they maxed out. "Raw radio energy was pouring down from the sky" and into the big dish. It came in indecipherable "blips and dashes." JPL was now awake and listening in. "You've got a radio frequency source in your beam, and it ain't Mariner." One of the operators went outside to see if he could spot anything. He couldn't. Then, eight minutes after it began, everything went silent. Mariner, meanwhile, went on with its travels, apparently oblivious to the disturbance.

JPL came back on later. They wanted DSIF to manually point the dish back in the direction it was pointing when the signal was being received. (These dishes typically slowly rotate with the calculated orbits of their targets, and by now this one was pointing well away). They did so. JPL wondered if there was a galactic radio source, perhaps a quasar, at that position. They did not correct for the Earth's rotation, but found the signal again. This could only mean that the source was not astronomical but relatively nearby. Nothing was apparent visually, but a sound sweep revealed that the source was a perfect circle (2° in diameter).

JPL was as excited as South Africa. They requested that an RTC-0 be transmitted at the source. (RTC-0 is a packet of radio pulses that tells a spacecraft to get ready to receive a transmission.) After it was sent, the source was simply gone. It never returned.

Perhaps I am losing it, but so far this story seems plausible. But the story wasn't over. About two months later, Gray-Cobb was on duty with the same JPL operator from the evening of the incident. What happened with the UFO, he asked? The JPL guy looked and said that the pages for the event were missing from the log. This gnawed on our witness, and a month later he decided to take out and play the duplicate set of recordings that they had made that day. (One went to JPL, the other was kept there.) But the tapes were missing. Gray-Cobb and a friend went to the station manager to report this. The manager said that he knew. Two men with "authorization" had come three days after the event to confiscate the tapes.

Well, what do we make of this? A sole reporter, but so far it doesn't seem impossible that a radio telescope could have a mystery-signal event, or that the U.S. government would confiscate all the records. But the problem is with Gray-Cobb. He returned to British Columbia shortly with his family and was looking to begin a new line of work. His wife was heavily into astrology and convinced him to give it a try. Soon he became a successful astrologer and media personality who was well-known in the Vancouver area. (He wasn't really a good astrologer; as evidence, he was a regular on a sort of Canadian version of *What's My Line?* When, of all people, J. Allen Hynek was on the game show, he could guess nothing accurate about him at all.)

So (groan), do we give him a break on finding easy employment as an astrologer? Or do we flush the whole story since we don't like his choice of work?

(continued on page 24)

UFO over Baltimore

BY FR. KENNETH J. DELANO

Editor's Note: Members of Moonwatch teams weren't the only qualified individuals seeing UFOs in the Sputnik era. Many other people did, including amateur astronomers and even future Moonwatch members. The sighting recounted in this article was reported to J. Allen Hynek 10 years after the fact by Fr. Kenneth J. Delano, who at the time was a seminarian. Delano became a Catholic priest, and he also became an active member of the American Association of Variable Star Observers and the Association of Lunar and Planetary Observers, where he worked at the time he made the report. A qualified individual, indeed. And he was later a member of the Moonwatch program.

Delano attended a lecture by Hynek in Massachusetts in November 1967. Hynek's call for any UFO reports, old or new, prompted him to send a full report soon after. Although 10 years had passed since his sighting, he didn't need to trust his memory because he had made reports at the time to the Air Force and NICAP, and he kept carbon copies.

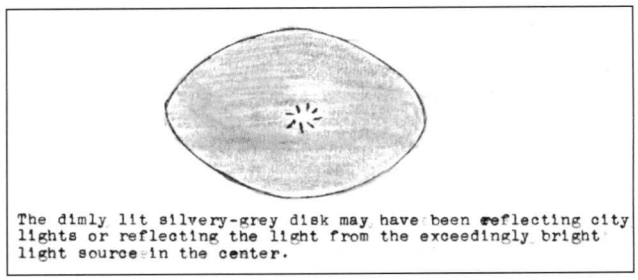
If you want to know how to write up a report, if and when you see a UFO, Delano's account is an exemplar. If he were nearby, we'd shake his hand and offer a hearty congratulations for that fact alone.

On November 6, 1957, I went out for a walk on the campus of St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, Maryland, to check the sky for northern lights. I was taking part as a volunteer observer in the International Geophysical Year visual aurora reporting program, and aurorae had been visible an hour previously. It was a very clear night, with the nearly full moon high in the sky and not a trace of any clouds or haze in the sky, but no aurorae were visible.

At 9:43 p.m. EST a brilliant white light in the NW sector of the sky attracted my attention. Since I was also observing and reporting meteors for the IGY program, I took careful note of its position in western Cygnus, about 35° above the western horizon, and immediately started to count off the seconds. After watching it approach for 3 or 4 seconds, I became aware that it was not a slow-moving fireball, despite the unsteadiness of its light. It was leaving no trail or train, and its general brightness was remaining too constant for too long a time.

Fr. Kenneth J. Delano. Photo from the dust jacket of his book Many Worlds, One God *(1977)*

I moved back several feet to get a view that would be clear of the bare branches of the tree through which I had been viewing the light. When I looked up again, the brilliant white light was nearly overhead and was at a magnitude of –6 (about 6 times as bright as Venus at its greatest brilliancy). But now a faint silvery-grey, elliptical disk was clearly seen above or around the bright light located in the center of the disk.



The dimly lit silvery-grey disk may have been reflecting city lights or reflecting the light from the exceedingly bright light source in the center.

The object may be picturesquely described as a remarkably brilliant and nearly star-like globe of light centered within a dimly lighted and slightly inclined aluminum disk. The circumference of the elliptical disk was clearly defined. The disk's major axis was judged to be 22′ of arc (about 2/3 the diameter of the moon) and its minor axis was about 15′ of arc. The direction of motion was in line with the major axis.

Kenneth J. Delano was an amateur astronomer, a Catholic priest, assistant pastor at a church in Fall River, Massachusetts, and the author of Astrology: Fact or Fiction? *(1973) and* Many Worlds, One God *(1977), the latter one of the few books on extraterrestrial life to receive a papal imprimatur. He was a member of the Moonwatch program.*

One of the most astonishing things about the object was the absence of sound. Almost immediately upon realizing that the object was not a meteor, conscious effort was made to hear any sound from it. When the object was nearly overhead, a very faint whirring sound may have been heard, but I would not vouch for the objectivity of the whirring sound, since I was expecting and even hoping to hear some kind of sound from the object so it wouldn't seem so incredible a phenomenon.

I was able to see the disk for some six seconds until the object was lost from sight by passing over the seminary building behind me. While watching it I recalled hearing on the radio that day about a mysterious football-shaped object seen out west, so I took particular note whether this object had pointed ends, but no, they were rounded. I took my eyes off the object once and then looked again, just to make sure that I wasn't seeing things, but the dully glowing disk was really there.

It had taken the object some 15 seconds to travel from a point 35° above the western horizon to a point just beyond the zenith, where it was temporarily lost from view as it passed over the building I was standing near. By moving some 250 feet to the front of the building I was able to view the object again, but by then only the object's brilliant white light was visible due to its distance perhaps and also to the glare of the nearly full moon now in view high in the southern sky. The bright light continued its steady, undeviating course, fluctuating all the while, and traveling at an angular speed equivalent to a 500 to 600 mph jet plane at an elevation of 10,000 feet. (When near the zenith its angular speed was such that it covered a course of 25 degrees in approximately 6 seconds). When the light passed from view beyond the eastern horizon it was of magnitude zero—still quite prominent. (The apparent horizon was only 5 to 10 degrees above the true horizon.) The light was seen to fluctuate in intensity and frequency more like the scintillations of a bright star on a night of poor seeing than like the blinking of plane lights, although the fluctuations did seem to be more regular than stellar scintillations. The seeing conditions on that night were good and so the stars themselves were not twinkling much.

I was rather surprised when I found out later that soundlessness and fluctuating lights were common features of UFOs. Previous to my sighting, about all I knew of flying saucers was what their name suggested and that once in a while someone would claim to have seen a flying egg or football. I had no definite convictions against the existence of flying saucers, but I was very much skeptical about them.

In all, I had watched the object for four minutes—from 9:43 to 9:47 p.m. Checks on its course were later made with a compass and a simple inclinometer and with the aid of landmarks and stars. In that way its course was established as being from a point 10° north of west to a point 10° south of east. The fact that the bright object had such a straight, undeviating path and that its light was unsteady might incline some (disregarding the disk and the long duration of 4 minutes) to claim that it was a meteor. But I have observed and reported close to 1,800 meteors during the IGY and by no stretch of the imagination could what I saw have possibly been a meteor. What I saw had all the appearance of being something of a mechanical nature—at least that's the impression it made.

On the following morning, I heard Jerry G., a fellow student, describe an object he saw in the west in exact conformity with what I had seen—exact as to time, direction, brightness, color, the disk, and especially the absence of any sound. The only difference was that to him the disk around the bright central light appeared as an indistinct glow. However, he viewed the object from a screened 3rd floor window. He was telling others his story without any knowledge of my having seen it too. No one but myself was outside at the time. Another student, Walter H., recalled seeing also from a window an unusually bright and rapidly moving light in the east at about the same time. As far as I know, there was nothing in the newspaper or radio about this mysterious light over the Roland Park section of Baltimore.

Many suggestions have been made trying to explain the phenomenon as a conventional aircraft under varied and unusual circumstances, but no combination of them has been able to explain all the details. To be taken into consideration are:

1. The great brilliancy of the light. The light could not have been a spotlight, because its decline in brightness from magnitude –6 at the zenith to magnitude 0 at the horizon very closely corresponds to a globular light decreasing at a rate inversely proportional to the square of its distance. In addition, no beam of light was seen.

2. The absence of sound on such a calm, windless night. The large angular dimensions and great angular speed would limit the object's height if it were a conventional aircraft, thus placing it within hearing range.

3. The fluctuations of the white light and the absence of any other colored lights common to aircraft.

4. The appearance of nothing more than a clearly defined and evenly illuminated elliptical disk seen centered about the light, despite the brightness of a nearly full moon.

There is one more point that should be noted. I was able to establish a minimum height of 700 feet, but the object's height may very well have been way above this figure, and I suspect that it was. The 700 feet as the lowest conceivable elevation represents a very generous margin of error, since actually no parallax effect at all was noted at the zenith. I had to move 250 feet perpendicularly to the object's course in order to view it again shortly after it had passed the zenith, and if the object was any lower than 700 feet I would most certainly have noted the displacement of the object's course in relationship to the background of stars.

Follow-Up

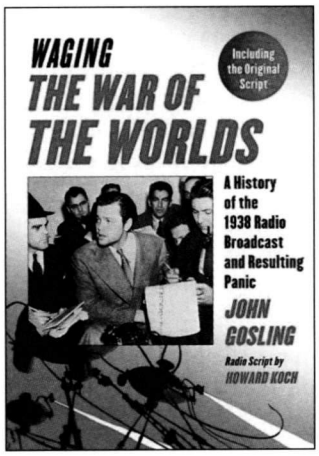
[These comments were added based on questions from Dr. Hynek.] I feel quite confident in the accuracy of my magni-

(continued on page 24)

BOOK REVIEW

Waging The War of the Worlds*: A History of the 1938 Radio Broadcast and Resulting Panic, Including the Original Script,* by John Gosling. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2009. ISBN 978-0-7864-4105-1. 237p.

On a winter evening five years ago, I listened for the first time to the Mercury Theater adaptation of H. G. Wells's *The War of the Worlds.* (The novel itself was first published in 1898.) I had been aware of it nearly all of my life. As a 6th grader in the late 1950s, I had even read Howard Koch's script which I found reprinted in *The Treasury of Science Fiction Classics,* a thick 1954 anthology edited by Harold W. Kuebler. (To this day that volume sits in my library, having outlasted my interest in science fiction by decades.) Curiously, *Treasury* arrived in the same package with three others as part of my introductory offer to the Science Fiction Book Club. One of those three was Edward J. Ruppelt's *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects,* which is how I happen to be here writing these words.



In any event, hearing the broadcast at last, knowing—obviously—exactly what it was, I still found myself strangely chilled and filled with dread. Its power remains. It is a brilliant piece of work, and it's hardly a wonder that it terrified naïve listeners already jittery about the prospect of another world war. Concern about a recurrence shows up occasionally in official documents speculating on the social effects of UFOs and of extraterrestrial intelligence generally. Some civilian UFO writers hold—if only by unproven inference—that high-level fears on this score have led to a massive cover-up of "the truth."

John Gosling, a British science-fiction critic and historian, may know as much about Orson Welles's notorious radio show, aired on the evening of October 30, 1938, as anyone living. *Waging The War of the Worlds* will tell you all you want to know about the episode, its sequels, and its still-resounding echoes in popular culture. Gosling's writing, if not terribly elegant, is brisk and straightforward, and it never bogs down as it reviews the histories, the personalities, and the cultural contexts of the Martian panics that only began that night inside a CBS studio in New York City.

Others include (to quote Gosling) "an appalling series of events . . . in Quito, the capital city of Ecuador, culminating in a riot, a hugely destructive blaze that would level the office of a major newspaper, and a significant loss of life." This particular tragedy occurred on February 12, 1949, after a radio station had revised the Welles/Koch material to conjure up a real-time invasion of that country. This was, in fact, the second South American panic. The first took place on November 12, 1944, in Chile. In this instance, though many people were driven into the streets in fear, no fatalities followed.

Memorial to the 1938 broadcast in Grover's Mill, New Jersey

Gosling is sensitive to the role UFO sightings and speculations played in affording post-1947 Martian panics a certain surface plausibility. One incident, in fact, had nothing to do with the Welles/Koch script or any variant thereof. It was triggered in November 1954 when a bored young Brazilian railroad telegrapher in Caratinga transmitted a Morse code message to a colleague in another city, reporting in a tongue-in-cheek dispatch that a flying saucer with humanoid occupants had landed in the area.

"Extraordinarily," Gosling writes, "the story of a Martian invasion then took on a life of its own, spreading from the telegraph office to newspapers and radio stations, before finally coming to the attention of the authorities." The Brazilian military even launched reconnaissance aircraft to search for the landed saucer. When Caratinga's overloaded phone system broke down under the strain of calls from alarmed citizens, a menacing Martian presence able to destroy terrestrial communications systems seemed all but certain. Gosling sets the panic within the context of the nation's unstable political situation, bordering on civil war, but notes something else potentially even more alarming: "In October and November of 1954 the country was awash in stories of UFO sightings, some of them extremely compelling and many including the direct involvement of the Brazilian air force."

The author possesses a refreshing degree of knowledge about the UFO phenomenon, in which he clearly has a sympathetic interest. In his view, a certain degree of unease about unexplained reports is hardly an irrational emotion. Moreover, "there is certainly no doubt that . . . the air force and other government agencies have long gone to great lengths to promote mundane explanations, no matter how extraordinary or compelling the evidence. That this has only served to fuel conspiracy theories is ironic, and it is fascinating to imagine that one of the great mysteries of the modern age may owe a large part of its mystique, not to a sinister conspiracy to cover up real alien invaders, but to the actions of a government that was itself spooked by the most famous radio hoax in history."—*Jerome Clark.* ✦

LANDÉVENNEC, MAY 20, 1974

BY JOËL MESNARD

One of the most significant UFO events in France took place in Trans-en-Provence, on January 8, 1981. It owes its exceptional interest to the fact that scientific analysis has identified important biochemical transformations of the plants on the landing site (in this case, alfalfa). This case was outlined in numbers 207 and 231/232 of *Lumières dans La Nuit.*

It has quickly become a classic case in ufology, and because of its importance, it has been the object of passionate debunking, with specialists in disinformation trying to reduce it to mundane causes—side effects from the use of a concrete mixer, clandestine oil drilling, traces left by a Fenwick forklift, and confabulation by the witness.

None of these elaborations, of course, has explained the findings established by Professor Bounias concerning the profound biochemical alteration of the alfalfa. It was long thought that this example was the first of its kind, but it is not. Here is a similar case that occurred just under seven years earlier.

THE INCIDENT

Monday, May 20, 1974, 7 p.m. M. Le Meur, a baker, accompanied by his wife and their two children, was traveling on the small road that leads to Landévennec (Finistère), on the north shore of the Crozon peninsula in Britanny. For several moments, a powerful light ahead at ground level attracted their attention.

At the end of a turn, the source of the light appeared. It consisted of a string of seven or eight spheres, arranged horizontally, at approximately one meter above the road. They all had a diameter of some 40 centimeters, the string being thus approximately three meters long. The ensemble, which was located 25 meters, at most, from the car, shone with a very powerful white light.

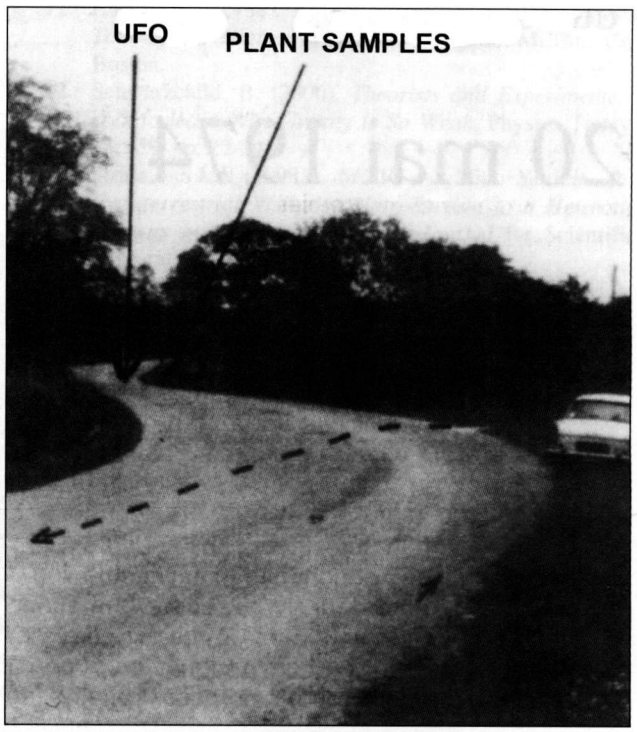
Not understanding what he was dealing with, M. Le Meur signaled several times with his headlights. No response. He turned the car around in all haste and got away as rapidly as he was able. He did not stop until the Gendarmerie station of Telgruc-sur-Mer, in order to report without delay.

On May 21, the police examined the site of the incident. On the edge of the road, and on a surface of 2–3 square meters, the ferns appeared abnormally wilted. The investigators from the Gendarmerie took numerous photos of the sites and took several fern plants, with their roots. They did the same, for comparison, at 5 meters and 8 meters from the center of the affected zone. The samples were immediately sent to a private laboratory near Paris.

THE CONTEXT

It may be assumed that neither the place nor the date of the incident owe anything to chance. The place of the encounter is only a short 15 kilometers, as the bird flies, from the harbor of Brest and Île Longue (actually a peninsula), which shelters nuclear submarines. (The naval air station of Lanvéoc-Poulmic is closer still, about 10 km.)

The place of the encounter is shown below, photographed by Rémy Gueguen some days after the incident. The single arrow, on the right hand side of the



The location of the sighting.

Joël Mesnard is a leading UFO researcher in France and editor of Lumières dans la Nuit. *This article is a translation of one that originally appeared in* Lumières dans la Nuit, *no. 386, p. 31.*

road, shows the path of arrival of the car, which quickly made a turnaround on the lower part and left. The string of light balls would be located between the two turns. As to the date, or more simply, to the year, it corresponds to a remarkable peak of activity of the UFO phenomenon: It was then at the height of a wave that occurred over several years, a wave that would lead ultimately to the creation in 1977 of GEPAN, the unit of the French space agency detailed to investigate UFOs, and to a period of growth without parallel for ufology in France.

In *LDLN* 137, p. 27, there is a mention of another observation of a UFO on that date, at Bertangles (Somme), some 320 miles to the northeast.

Another uncommon occurrence would take place in Finistère four months later, at Riec-sur-Bélon (*LDLN* 145), but the list of observations in France in the course of this year 1974 is impressive and contains a number of other cases just as extraordinary.

The chlorophyll and the case file

A few days after the incident, two samples, one gram from each fern, were analyzed. They were suspended for two hours in a boiling mixture of ethanol and chloroform, filtered while hot, then evaporated.

The control-sample (bottle marked "green" on the right) weighed 50 milligrams and contained chlorophyll and resin. The other ("brown"), drawn from the plants that had withered, contained only 20 milligrams after the procedure. The chlorophyll totally disappeared. M. Vernier, an organic chemist, noted the presence of an unknown element presenting a spot in chromatography. This unidentified element appeared only in ultraviolet light. The report concludes: "disappearance of the chlorophyll, accelerated aging, biochemical trauma of undetermined origin." Made aware of the case, the deputy of Finistère immediately informed the Ministry of Defense about it.

If the trauma suffered by the plants is inexplicable, the final outcome of the case file is just as obscure. From the Ministry of Defense, it was transmitted to that of Industry and Research, "the most qualified agency for this type of research." The deputy of Finistère, a relative of Minister of Defense Yvon Bourges, tried to retrieve the file, in vain.

A very brief article was devoted to this case in number 86 of *Armor,* a monthly Breton economic journal. Only 10 lines are devoted to it in the book by Jean-François Boëdec, *Fantastiques rencontres au bout du monde,* published in 1982, which explains why this case is not more widely known.

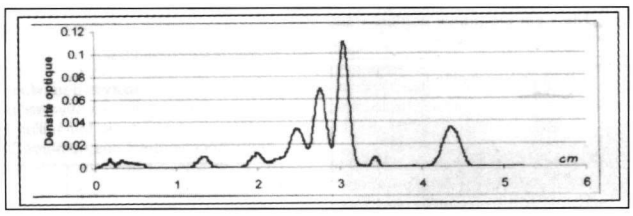
The affair of Landévennec seems to be the first case of a biochemical analysis placing into evidence trauma to plants at the site of a UFO's appearance. ✦

An attempt to learn about the trauma undergone by the ferns

by Jérôme Frasson

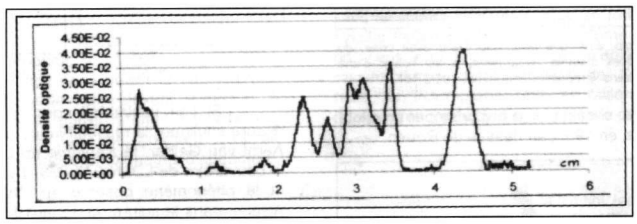
In order to try to demonstrate all or part of the effects observed on the ferns during the Landévennec case (see article above), we have compared the chromatograms of two identical plants, one having undergone a period in an oven at 270° C. for one minute, and the other serving as a control. The analytical technique (since improved) is explained in *LDLN* 389, pp. 35–36.

The control chromatogram is perfectly normal, and presents a typical aspect:



The chromatogram of the burned plant shows a very strongly disrupted profile (see the graph in the next column).

This means that the components have been totally altered and destroyed. In looking at this more closely and in carrying out an observation under a UV lamp, one notes a very



pronounced spot of rose-red color in the altered sample: It has to do with pheophytins, which are a residue of the degradation of chlorophyll. Moreover, while the chlorophyll content has strongly decreased (by 80%), that of pheophytins is 40 times more elevated than in the control sample. This could possibly explain the disappearance of the chlorophyll by a violent thermal shock (for example, exposure to powerful infrared), the same as the red spot appearing under the UV lamp (an accumulation of pheophytins). We know that UFOs sometimes leave traces of burns after their passage. In that case, the heat emission would have been considerable.

There remains the prospect of a great deal of work to be done. This article constitutes a suggestion of a course to follow by other volunteers, with the aid of methods which are all modest. ✦

LETTER

ROSWELL AND ROWE

To the editor:

In reading the article by Kevin D. Randle and Anthony Bragalia entitled. "Two Roswell witnesses, reconsidered" (*IUR* 32:3, pp. 6–8, 24), I took particular note of certain comments given by the 90-year old firefighter named Smith in the section pertaining to Frankie Rowe. The nature of these comments were such that I found them difficult to fathom from a real-world point of view. These statements relate to the Roswell Fire Department, and what they allegedly knew (or did not know) about the supposed crash and recovery of an alien vehicle outside the city. Presumably, these particular comments by Smith presented no problems for the coauthors of this article, since they seem to blithely accept them at more-or-less face-value. This ill-advised method of casually accepting witness testimony is a very poor substitute for critical thinking, the lack of which by more than a few researchers is primarily responsible for allowing the Roswell bandwagon to continue bouncing merrily along to this day.

The first item that raises a serious problem is the claim by former firefighter Smith that a colonel from Roswell AAF paid a visit to the Roswell Fire Department and supposedly told those on duty something to the effect that "an unknown object from someplace else" had crashed outside. The military would take care of it, and that their help wasn't needed. They were not to tell anyone what they heard.

What's wrong with this picture? Frankly, an awful lot. We are supposed to believe that a high-ranking AAF officer simply spills the beans on the ultimate secret to a bunch of civilians, when there was absolutely no reason for him to do so. All that he had to say was that a plane (maybe an experimental one) had crashed in the desert, and that the military was taking care of it. Instead, he then incredibly refers to the crash of an alien spaceship, and then tells them to keep this amazing story to themselves. This is rank nonsense! If an alien spaceship really had crashed, this is no way to keep it Top Secret. For me, this story does nothing to enhance Roswell as a genuine event of epic proportions. To the contrary, it only adds one more peculiar aspect to an already highly doubtful story.

The second item that raises a serious problem is the claim by former firefighter Smith that the now-deceased firefighter Dan Dwyer (father of Frankie Rowe) drove out to the crash site in his personal car, and was able to get close enough to get a good view of the ultimate secret. What's wrong with this picture? Again, as with the AAF colonel's story, an awful lot. Wasn't there supposed to be tight security in place that would have prevented Dwyer (or anyone else) from getting anywhere even remotely close to the site? Most likely, miles away at best. And then he is allowed to simply drive away and blab to others about the remarkable sight that he has just witnessed? Wouldn't he have been sworn to secrecy and perhaps even warned of dire consequences if he opened his mouth? This is a pure absurdity if an alien spaceship really had crashed. For me, the Dwyer episode is just one more nonsensical piece of the effluvia that comprises the Roswell story.

Herbert S. Taylor
Port Jefferson Station, New York

The authors respond:

Taylor's criticisms can be easily answered.

To begin, fireman Smith (his actual surname) was approached by Bragalia and later by Randle. Smith did not come forward to offer this information or to publicize his knowledge of the event. In fact, he publicly stayed silent on the matter for six decades and was quite reticent to speak with us. Randle noted that he seemed annoyed at answering the same questions again, but he did answer them.

Smith was referred to us by the namesake son of Roswell's Fire Department chief, Rue Chrisman, who indicated that Smith "knew what had happened." In fact, Smith asked Randle not to call again; he did not wish to be further involved in the matter and he had said all there was to say. Smith's knowledge was limited to the little he saw at the fire station, which means the visit by an officer from the base. He acknowledged some sort of aerial crash of an unknown object. RAAF was clearly concerned that the fire department would later find out about the crash and might have felt compelled to respond to a fire call. They did not want the fire department to respond to the crash if they found out about it themselves, or to act on information that may have been provided by others who might have contacted the fire department. The officer needed to impress upon the fire department that it was a very serious matter, that it involved the crash of something that was still being investigated by the military, and that the military had the matter under its full control.

Dwyer's personal interest in the event led him to travel out to the vicinity of the crash area on his own volition. Rather than an "official run" by the department (which explains why there was nothing in the fire log, something that had bothered many for years), curious individuals were bound to try to find out more. And this is what Dwyer did. How he saw what he saw—or how much he may have glimpsed—is not a real issue. To speculate just how he managed to view what he did will never be known. But Dwyer privately related his travel to the site only to his immediate family and to some of the others that he worked with at the Department, including fireman Smith. Outside of his own family and select coworkers, Dwyer never did openly come forward to relate his knowledge. He did remain silent to the public on the matter.

Finally, we find it interesting that Taylor accepts the

Karl Pflock information without critical comment. Clearly Pflock spoke to this man and then used only part of those statements to discredit the testimony by Frankie Rowe . . . unfairly. Clearly Rowe was relating the information she had been given by her father. Giving Pflock the benefit of the doubt here, it is clear that he simply did not ask the follow-up questions. He got the information he wanted and then let it go.

As we pointed out, we received the same information as Pflock did. We were a little disappointed in that, but then Randle simply asked, "Did you know Dan Dwyer?" And with that, the fireman told the rest of the story.

It seems to us that Taylor wants it both ways. He accepts the first half of the fireman's story, which tends to refute Rowe, but then rejects the rest because the man is too old. True, Pflock talked to him 10 years earlier, but he was still elderly. So, do we reject the testimony of the elderly man because the event was 50 years in the past, or do we accept it as true because it was what we wanted to hear? If so, then how do we eliminate this later testimony based on age and fading memories?

Kevin Randle and Anthony Bragalia

✦

2008 Canadian Survey—*continued from page 8*

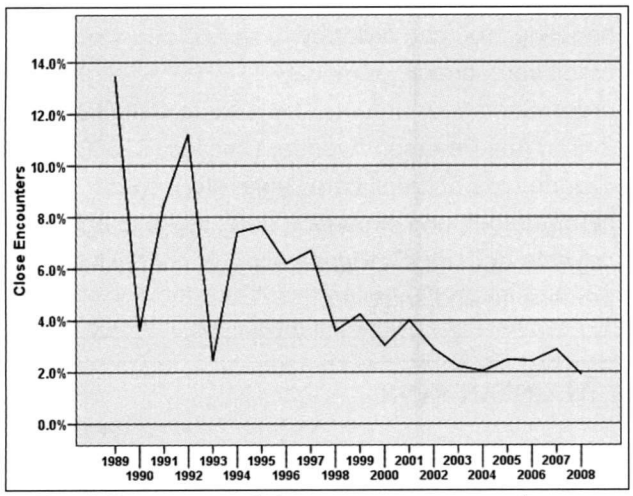


Fig. 5. Percentage of close encounter reports by year, 1989–2008.

to that in Figure 5). We have to sift more data to find close encounter cases.

So in summary: UFO reports as a whole are increasing, unexplained UFO reports have increased but now leveled off, and close encounter reports have *decreased* and recently leveled off at about 2% of all cases. To put this another way, the rather uninteresting part of the UFO phenomenon has increased, while the portion that offers the highest potential has declined. That pattern is hard to explain by resort to the internet, television, our poor education system, fears over terror, or anything else that comes to mind.

I did suggest some possible reasons in my article from last year, and one that comes readily to mind is the simplest: The *percentage* of close encounters has dropped because their *number* is fairly steady and doesn't fluctuate much over time. Close encounters occur at a relatively steady rate, whatever else is happening with those large triangles.

UFO skeptics don't like to mull over this type of data because it requires them to confront the possible reality of the phenomenon. They instead prefer to focus on individual cases which they can attempt to pick off and explain away, one by one. When they do discuss gross sighting characteristics, they usually choose to concentrate on how UFO flaps and waves are indicative of social panic or a heightened tension because of the Cold War, or I suppose in the current decade, fear of terrorists. They don't study data such as the percentage of close encounter cases because it doesn't suit their purpose of dismissing the UFO phenomenon as something to be taken seriously.

There is an additional point to make about these Canadian close encounter cases. It has been my impression, and that of several colleagues at CUFOS, that the quality of close encounter cases has diminished over the years, even if their numbers have remained steady. Close encounter cases from years ago often involved UFOs seen at *very* close range, with unmistakable physical effects. In contrast, close encounters in Canada, and elsewhere, are rather paltry cousins to those cases of years past. Although few details are published about individual cases in the Canadian survey report, here are the terse descriptions of the seven cases classified as close encounters of the second kind in 2008. This type of case should include physical evidence or a physical record of the UFO.

Odd light moving in sky; loud noises heard; footsteps
Object seen above building; witness memory lapse
Image of two aliens appeared on wall of house
Fireballs approached, became "mechanical craft"; rotating lights
Odd lights seen through trees; trees bent back?
Sighting of "skyboat" and "aliens"; video
Video of four UFOs and "alien pilots"

These seven are possibly the least intriguing set of close encounters I have encountered in studying the UFO phenomenon. Whatever else we can say about UFOs today in Canada, we can assert confidently that the close encounters don't match up to their predecessors in providing us something substantial and intriguing to study. Enough of these relatively distant encounters. Where are the Falcon Lake and Langenburg cases of today? ✦

THE BIG STUDY

CUFOS board member and longtime ufologist and anomalist Michael D. Swords now has his own blog, The Big Study, at http://thebiggeststudy.blogspot.com. Recent posts include ruminations on Carl Sagan, balls of light, electric girls, surviving archaeocetes (fossil whales), poltergeists, Roswell, the Oz effect, cryptid cats, the 1976 Tehran jet UFO encounter, and nature spirits.

BALTIMORE—*continued from page 18*

tude estimates. An estimate of zero magnitude for the UFO on the eastern horizon was derived from comparisons with the first magnitude stars then visible; and the estimated –6 magnitude at the zenith was based on a memory-comparison with –4 magnitude Venus.

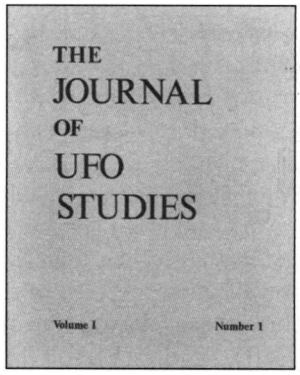
I have given some thought to the brightness of the light as opposed to the absence of sound. The night of November 6 was an ideal night as far as acoustics was concerned. It was a rather cold night and a very still one, without even a rustling of the autumn leaves. . . . Being situated on high ground, I should have been able to easily hear any plane up to at least two miles overhead, and jets at even higher elevations. . . . Higher altitudes would better explain the absence of sound from any aircraft, but would call for an even brighter globular light.

It should be noted that the silvery-grey elliptical disc encompassing the bright light was seen for only a fleeting 6 seconds before being blocked from view by the seminary building. . . . Given more time to look at the dimly lit disc encompassing the bright light, I could more surely have assured myself that I wasn't letting my imagination carry me away. Still, I have no good reason to doubt that I did in fact see a real elliptical disc about 2/3 the diameter of the Moon during those 6 seconds. ✦

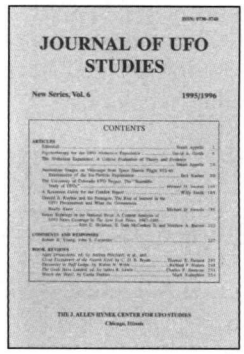
MOONWATCH—*continued from page 16*

A very minor, probably unrelated point: On June 15, 1969, scientists at the U.S. Environmental Science Services Association's Wave Propagation Laboratory in Boulder, Colorado, detected two "mystery radio sound" events that emanated from directly overhead. There was no explanation. Or was there? ✦

JUFOS ISSUES ON CD



The longest-running, peer-reviewed, scientific journal of UFO research is the *Journal of UFO Studies,* published by CUFOS since 1980. Now all 12 volumes (3 from the old series and 9 from the new series) have been converted to PDF format and are available on a single CD. Each volume is contained in one PDF file, which is fully searchable.



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THE TRIGGER FOR THE MARTIAN PANIC

The day before Halloween, 1938. That evening, my mother (as she would be in 18 months) was in the living room of her family's house, doing last-minute alterations on her sister Elizabeth's new party dress. There was a radio in the room, and it was on for background noise. Because no one was consciously listening to it, the radio was tuned to the station carrying Orson Welles's *Mercury Theatre of the Air* (see p. 19) and not to the overwhelmingly popular ventriloquist Edgar Bergen and his dummy sidekick Charlie McCarthy.

At one point, my mother stopped sewing, raised her head, and said: "Is this thing on the radio real?" To which Elizabeth replied: "Nah, it's just a show. Hurry up!" And that was the Great Martian Panic in my family (at least, as my mother told the story).

What caught my mother's attention from an exacting task? It was silence and other apparent glitches in the broadcast. The analog tuner of a 1938 radio was moved smoothly through the broadcast frequencies by fingers or just a thumb turning a knob. A station's signal would come in, indistinct and static-ridden, become clearer and louder, then decline as the tuner swept past it. This meant that even the listener who wanted a certain show had to be intrigued in the short time before the thumb rolled the knob to something else. An inept silence could lose a fickle listener.

But in 1938, there was a time when radio broadcasters had to allow silence, news breaks stumbling into programs, awkward chatter, or breakaways to music: during news bulletins from Europe, crisis coverage, or pauses for speeches by political leaders—all glitches that became, implicitly rather than officially, the signals of approaching catastrophe.

The panic (exaggerated in the telling, then and since) was in large part not a Martian panic, but a sort of war panic, set in the wake of Hitler's annexation of Austria and the Sudetenland. People were reacting to signals they were (rather unknowingly) accustomed to treat as meaningful as screams and sirens in the night.—*Frank J. Reid.* ✦